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Rodino Asks GAO to Reopen Probe on Nazis

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Rep. Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.), chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, asked the General Accounting Office yesterday to reopen an investigation it closed in 1978 on whether U.S. intelligence agencies ever obstructed probes of Nazi war criminals living in the United States.

In a letter to Comptroller General Charles A. Bowsher, Rodino said that if allegations raised on last Sunday's CBS program "60 Minutes" are correct, a "great deal of vital information" was withheld from GAO investigators who instituted their probe in 1977.

Rodino said the allegations call into question the conclusions of the GAO probe that there was no conspiracy to halt investigation of Nazi war criminals.

Former federal prosecutor John J. Loftus charged on the television program that State Department and Army intelligence agencies recruited as many as 300 Byelorussian Nazis and brought them surreptitiously to the United States to work as spies and propagandists against the Soviet Union. Loftus said many of the Byelorussians recruited were Nazi collaborators guilty of war crimes.

Loftus also charged that the whereabouts of these Byelorussian Nazis was covered up throughout the 1970s. He said U.S. intelligence agencies deliberately withheld from GAO the names and whereabouts of many of the Byelorussian emigres, some of whom still work for federal agencies.

Rodino asked Attorney General William French Smith to determine whether the Byelorussians were brought to this country illegally and whether any U.S. intelligence agencies may have obstructed congressional inquiries by misleading or lying to the GAO and the House Judiciary Committee chaired by Rodino.